



GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING

LEGISLATIVE & POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES January 10, 2008

Council Members, Liaisons & Committee Participants Present

Sharon McKinley (Chairperson), Kati Bates, Bill Engler, George Evanoff, Joyce Finkelstein, Paul Herrmann, Bernadine Hoffman, Marilyn Johnson, Doyle Meredith, Bernadette Polley, Barry Spiker, Pam Stevenson, Victoria Collins, Diana Toussaint

Council Staff Present

Melanie Starns, Cathy De Lisa, Shawn Trobia, Elsa Gaynor

Guests Present

Karla Averill (AHCA), Siobhan McCurdy (Alzheimer's Association), Lupe Solis (AARP), Tim Schmaltz (PAFCO), Lisa Wynn (DHS)

Call to Order, Welcome, Introductions & Approval of Minutes

Committee Chair Sharon McKinley called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m., and a welcome and introduction period followed. Minutes from the November 1, 2007 meeting were reviewed and approved through a motion made by Bill Engler and seconded by Joyce Finkelstein. The motion passed unanimously.

Updates

Bills Posted to Date

Executive Director Melanie Starns delivered a brief overview of the Legislation Online Arizona (LOLA) website, to include a statistical breakdown of the bills currently posted for this year, as well as a description of both the "short" and "full" lists of bills affecting older Arizonans that the Council will track. Additionally, Ms. Starns provided a summary of the attached report entitled the "Full List for the Council on Aging," and spoke briefly about several of the corresponding bills within.

JLBC Budget

Ms. Starns discussed the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) and its proposed budget cuts for 2008, specifically mentioning the proposed cuts to both the Lifespan Respite Program (\$500,000) and state funded Independent Living Supports (\$1.5 million). Additionally, Ms. Starns emphasized the importance of a Respite "coalition" in securing eligibility for federal funding, and a group discussion ensued regarding the necessity of maintaining "viable options" and speaking with state legislators in order to forestall these critical cuts to much needed services. Committee guests Mr. Tim Schmaltz of PAFCO (Protecting Arizona Families

Coalition) and Ms. Lupe Solis of AARP commented on the need to have a voice in the legislature through mobilizing “fellow citizens” and maintaining a daily presence with local legislators. Ms Starns mentioned that the Governor is looking at what needs to be done, and reiterated the Governor’s commitment to protecting gains and improving services to vulnerable adults and children while highlighting her overall promotion of “prudent” and “efficient” government.

Due to the length and nature of the preceding discussion and the need for some guests to leave at 10:30 a.m., Committee Chair Sharon McKinley proposed that the agenda be amended to begin the State Agency and Advocacy Group’s 2008 Legislative Platforms and Priorities immediately (10:11 a.m.), and the committee reached a consensus to continue with the remainder of the updates after the state agency presentations had concluded.

State Agency and Advocacy Group’s 2008 Legislative Platforms and Priorities (10:11 a.m.)

AARP

Ms. Lupe Solis, Associate Director of Advocacy at AARP Arizona provided an overview of the federal and state issues outlined within her organization’s “2008 Priorities,” and emphasized that this is a “year to protect” these services that are currently facing the possibility of budgetary cuts by the JLBC. Therefore, AARP does not plan to run new legislation this year. A copy of Ms. Solis’ handout is attached.

PAFCO

Mr. Tim Schmaltz of PAFCO spoke on the necessity of citizen action through a coalition based front, and he further emphasized that the budget fight for this year is his organization’s fight, as he cited that they have stopped more than \$1 billion in proposed human services cuts over the past seven years. Additionally, Mr. Schmaltz reiterated that his organization is committed to ensuring that coalition members are not “pitted against each other”, and he welcomed everyone’s participation. Mr. Schmaltz stated that the Committee will be added to PAFCO’s distribution list for receiving action reports. A copy of Mr. Schmaltz’s handout is attached.

Alzheimer’s Association: Desert Southwest Chapter

Ms. Siobhan McCurdy of the Alzheimer’s Association Arizona Public Policy Committee provided an overview of her organization’s 2008 platform, specifically discussing the Arizona Emergency Housing Review, the establishment of Alzheimer’s Emergency Advisory Alert System for missing and endangered adults, and the LTC insurance tax credit of \$1000 per return. Ms. McCurdy stated that the Endangered Person Advisory will be tentatively launched this summer, and that her organization is working with the Maricopa Elder Abuse Prevention Association (MEAPA) in order to pull all of the pieces together. Additionally, Committee participant Pam Stevenson of the Attorney General’s Office cited that she is co-chairing the Arizona Broadcaster’s development of an endangered person advisory system. A copy of Ms. McCurdy’s handout is attached, and her organization’s web address is www.alzdsw.org.

Arizona Health Care Association (AHCA)

Ms. Karla Averill of the Arizona Health Care Association stated that her organization will not be running any new bills this year, but rather they will strive to protect the services that are currently in place and ensure that there are no cuts to reimbursement rates. Ms. Averill expressed her concern about the budget and legislative proposed cuts to co-payment coverage and she noted that Mr. Mitch Milney will serve as AHCA's lobbyist.

Arizona Office of the Attorney General

Council Liaison Pam Stevenson of the Attorney General's Office discussed her agency's focus on non-budget bills, as well as taking the lead on such issues as strengthening sentencing for individuals who commit dangerous crimes against incapacitated adults, ensuring reverse mortgage disclosure to loan applicants, clearing the name of identity theft victims through the courts, supporting credit freeze, and working with the Department of Financial Institutions to crack down on equity theft during foreclosures.

Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES)

Ms. Diana Toussaint of the Department of Economic Security stated that the Division of Aging and Adult Services did not submit a legislative package this year, and her agency will work in concert with the Governor to continue to protect services to children and vulnerable adults.

Department of Health Services (DHS)

Ms. Lisa Wynn of the Department of Health Services provided an overview of her agency's legislative proposals, specifically discussing her department's request for funding to gain additional survey teams and to increase the annual salaries of RN's, cleaning up and modernizing the language and definitions within the current health care statutes to provide better guidance through such redefinition, and the process of Electronic or "E-licensing" in order to separate licensing from the survey process. Additionally, Ms. Wynn informed the committee that the Quality Improvement Grants are in the final stages of being awarded, and that the In-Home Services Study Committee(a result of last year's S1605 bill) has decided to table their discussions until after the legislative session, with the goal of reconvening in April to produce the required report by August 2008. Ms. Wynn informed the Committee that this would be her last meeting, as she has accepted a new position as the Executive Director of the state Medical Board. Committee Chair Sharon McKinley and Executive Director Melanie Starns expressed their congratulations and appreciation of the commitment and work Ms. Wynn has contributed to the Council.

Committee Chair Sharon McKinley thanked the presenters for their updates, and moved the agenda back in order to finalize the Updates that had been postponed during the State Agency and Advocacy Group's 2008 Legislative Platforms and Priorities.

Continued Updates - Amended Agenda

Session Timelines / Deadlines

Deputy Director Cathy De Lisa provided the Committee with an overview of important Legislative Session Dates and Deadlines for 2008, and Ms. Starns expounded on the process for the budget while providing an additional set of corresponding dates throughout the fiscal year.

Ms. Starns also extended an invitation to all of the participating organizations to provide the Council Staff with their specific bills for tracking through the Legislation Online Arizona (LOLA) website. A copy of Ms. De Lisa's handout is attached.

In-Home Services Study Committee

Ms. Starns noted that Lisa Wynn had provided the In-Home Services Study Committee update during her 2008 Legislative Platforms and Priorities presentation to the committee.

Council's 2008 Priorities – Approach and Prioritization

The Committee engaged in a group discussion highlighting the subjects of Dental Care, Transportation, and Legislation to determine its approach and prioritization of each, while drawing upon the attached overviews of the first two issues from the October 11, 2007 and November 1, 2007 Committee meetings. Council Chair Paul Herrmann suggested utilizing this year for "fact finding" and "learning" in order to better prepare for advocating in the following year. As such, Mr. Herrmann proffered the idea that the Committee split the three topics equally in a "40/40/40" division of Committee time, and that Council members be responsible for conducting outside reading and research between committee meetings to stay abreast of all current developments within each topic area. The committee discussed and subsequently agreed that this approach will assist in knowledgeable decision-making, and it was determined that all information collected by individual Council members between meetings will be directed to Ms. De Lisa for compilation and distribution to the Committee members on a weekly basis.

Other Updates, New Business & Announcements

Ms. Karla Averill provided a copy of the AHCA brochure which outlines their upcoming workshop for Direct Caregivers on "Conflict Resolution." A copy of Ms. Averill's brochure is attached.

Executive Director Melanie Starns noted that flyers for the upcoming Governor's Conference on Aging on May 14 -16, 2008 at the Mesa Marriott are available, and said that electronic versions of the flyer will also be sent out via e-mail.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Committee Chair Sharon McKinley at 11:26 a.m.

Next Meeting:

The next Legislative and Policy Coordinating Committee meeting will be Thursday, February 7, 2008 at 9:30 a.m. in the State Executive Tower, First Floor Conference Room. These meetings are open to the public.